Demonstration of Autonomous Rendezvous Technology (DART)

Case Study Transcript

Chris Calfee **Cost**

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The proposed cost for the DART project—and Orbital Sciences was the prime contractor—was approximately 50 million. Half of that cost was for the launch services, and that was essentially a fixed cost for the Pegasus launch vehicle. The other 25 million was for the design, development, test of the spacecraft itself which had the key sensors to provide the navigational technology to get to MUBLCOM, which was our target spacecraft. At the end of the day, the total cost of the DART project ended up about 110 million, and there were various reasons why we ended up there. We added several components prior to CDR, which were smaller areas. We increased some of the mission objectives. Probably the biggest reason though was—after CDR decision was made to go back and implement a series of system level test, some component level tests, which obviously drove up the cost—we extended the launch date, because of that initial addition of tests, by about six months. That in itself would add cost, and then our first launch attempt we had an issue on the ground with launch vehicle, and that slipped us about another month. In between that time, before we got another chance, there was a loads issue that came up, and that drove us to the April 15th 2005 launch date. So the original launch date was April 15th, 2004; we ended up flying April 15, 2005. So obviously just the slip then continuing of a marching army, the addition of tests, and addition of new requirements drove that cost up. And a majority of that cost was on the spacecraft side, not the launch vehicle side.